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## **Senate passes legislation removing certification of ballot proposals from the tarnished Board of State Canvassers**

**LANSING** – The Michigan Senate passed legislation today placing control over the state’s ballot-petition process in the hands of the nonpartisan State Bureau of Elections. The task of approving petition initiatives has been held by the Board of State Canvassers, but recent and past conduct by the board prompted the change.

“Michigan citizens are guaranteed the right to vote on amending their constitution,” said Sen. Alan Cropsey, R-Dewitt, the lead sponsor of the legislative package. “These bills passed today ensure that right by removing the certification process from the out-of-control Board of State Canvassers.”

Last summer, the Democratic members of the board refused to certify the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative (MCRI) proposal. In December, the Democratic members again refused to certify the initiative, defying an October Court of Appeals court order stating the board had “breached its clear legal duty to certify the petition” to appear on the 2006 ballot.

In 2004, the Democratic members, against the advice of the attorney general’s office and the State Bureau of Elections, refused to put a ballot question regarding same-sex marriage before voters and let them decide the matter. Also that year, the board refused to follow clear legal advice and clearly established court precedent on law, and refused to place Ralph Nader on the ballot.

The package of Senate and House bills will make the director of the State Bureau of Elections responsible for approving the ballot petitions as to form and deciding whether ballot questions have received an adequate number of signatures to go before voters. The elections director is a nonpartisan, civil service position within the Secretary of State’s Office.

“The most fundamental right we all have is to be governed by officials who will follow the rule of law,” said Cropsey, a former member of the board. “Clearly that right has been flouted by some members of the board. The governor should sign these bills and protect that right.”

The Senate bills will be sent to a House committee; the House bills will return to the House for concurrence.

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**Comments from Sen. Cropsey will be available for download this afternoon  
at the Majority Multi-Media Link at [www.senate.michigan.gov/gop](http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop).**